

Department of State- Embassy Kabul

Program Office: Embassy Kabul, Public Affairs Section
Funding Opportunity Title: Afghan University Media Operations Center Project
Announcement Type: Grant
Funding Opportunity Number: SCAKBL-10-GR-002-102706
Deadline for Applications: July 28, 2010
CFDA 19.501

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is limited to:

- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education (must be an NGO/PVO headquartered in Afghanistan).

The Department encourages organizations that have not previously received international program funding from the U.S. Government to apply under this announcement. New applicants must have a demonstrated expertise in construction and media center development, and the ability to develop and implement a program. Expertise and established relationships with indigenous NGOs and/or local officials in Afghanistan will be considered favorably.

Cost Sharing or Matching

This program does not require cost sharing.

Other Special Eligibility Criteria

Not Applicable.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- A) For questions relating to Grants.gov, please call the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726.
- B) For assistance with the requirements of this solicitation, contact **Kyle Thompson**, Program Officer, Embassy Kabul, Public Affairs Section, at:
Email: ThompsonKX@state.gov (*Preferred method of communication*)
Phone: 0706060622

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section is pleased to announce an open competition for assistance awards through this Request for Proposals (RFP). Public Affairs invite Afghan or U.S. non-profit/non-governmental organizations to submit proposals to establish “new multimedia centers” at partner Universities in Afghanistan. The grantee will construct the new building, procure the media equipment and provide training on the equipment to appropriate university staff. The Department will have approximately \$7.7 million available to award one grant for four university media centers.

Administration and National Policy Perspective

To support Afghanistan’s people and government as they establish a more secure, moderate, just, and lasting state; and to demonstrate American commitment and strengthen the partnership between Afghanistan and the United States

II. BACKGROUND

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section is located at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. The Public Affairs Section representatives are located at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul. More information about the Public Affairs Section and its Grants Program can be found at: <http://kabul.usembassy.gov/>

Objectives

This project falls under the CIV/MIL Afghan Communications Plan and its four strategic objectives. The project will complement the plan by doing the following:

- **Increase Engagement with Afghans** - Build connections with Afghans at all levels through targeted programming
- **Strengthen Afghan Educational System** - Complement other Mission initiatives to develop the Afghan educational system and boost institutional capacity
- **Support Civil Society** - Empower organizations and individuals that promote a robust civil society
- **Expand Exchange Opportunities** - Expose a greater number of Afghans to different perspectives through domestic, regional and international exchanges
- **Support and develop** moderate Afghan voices and new leaders
- **Develop and support** credible local broadcast content
- **Programs that develop** and deepen the creative, idea-forming sectors of Afghan society – journalists, artists, broadcasters, and publishers
- **To promote** responsible journalism within the future generation of Afghan journalists; and
- **To develop**, through training, the skills of faculty and journalists in producing their own radio, print, and television programming.

Funding Priorities

The U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs Section seeks to enhance the Faculty of Journalism by constructing a new Media Operation Center building for the select universities. These buildings will enable the faculty and students to put into practical application the theories they have learned in the classroom. Not only will this help the universities to promote and teach responsible journalism but also provides infrastructure that will widen the informational environment in Afghanistan. Below is a breakdown of the building and the training that will be involved:

The building will be a standard structure model. Each university will receive the same building and equipment. The building will have three floors: the first floor will be the printing facility, which will be able to print school papers, magazines, and other print material. The second floor will be a full functioning radio station which will be able to broadcast. The third floor will be a TV production studio and editing room. While the TV production studio will have the equipment to broadcast, the television facility will not broadcast as this would be cost prohibitive and would take too long to attain the necessary licenses to operate a TV station.

The training aspect of this project is in the style of “train the trainer.” The training will also be the responsibility of the grantee. It will be the grantee’s responsibility to ensure that the faculty is on par with instructing and operating the proper use of the equipment. In conclusion, this will improve educational and learning resources, technical capacities, and enhance the expertise of journalism faculty and student outcomes, through the establishment of a Afghan University Media Operations Center Project.

The Project Activities include;

- Design and Construction of a 3-level/story building including structures, electrical, HV/AC, Plumbing, and landscaping.
- Procurement and installation of a Basic Radio FM 500Watt Transmission Package.
- Procurement and installation of Basic VHF/ UHF 500Watt Television Equipment Package.
- Procurement and installation of a Basic Printing Equipment Package.
- Radio, TV and Print Media Equipment Operations Training.
- Provision of journals and periodic media educational publications.
 - 1) A program of training and instruction should be developed that will equip appropriate faculty, staff, and students with the ability to:Develop, operate, and maintain a functioning university radio station;
 - 2) Utilize TV production equipment for the purpose of training broadcast journalists and for the purpose of developing content for use in training and, potentially, for distribution to media outlets; and
 - 3) Develop and publish print media products such as a university newspaper or periodical for distribution to the university community and, perhaps, the broader community in which the university is located.

The capacity building program could include, as appropriate, curriculum reform, course development, and training for faculty in these areas as academic subjects.

III. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS Eligibility is limited to:

- Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education (preference will be given to those organizations who partner with local Afghan NGOs).
- Nonprofits that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education (must be an NGO/PVO headquartered in Afghanistan).

Applicants are not required to include funding from other donors. However, applications that include additional in-kind and/or cash contributions from non-U.S. Government sources will be more competitive, since cost-sharing demonstrates a strong commitment to the planned activities and will be considered to show greater cost effectiveness.

IV. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Award Period: 12 to 24 months

Award Amount: \$7.7 million is available for this grant program. It is expected to award one award for project execution at four universities.

Proposals should be submitted online via www.grants.gov. As an alternative, Afghan headquartered organizations that do not have a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS may submit proposals via email to the U.S. Embassy in Kabul at the following email address: kabulpdproposals@state.gov. Applications are accepted in English only, and final grant agreements will be concluded in English.

To submit a proposal via Grants.gov applicants will need to register with the site. Applicants are warned that Grants.gov requires a registration period of 10 days.

When submitting a proposal you are required to include the Federal Assistance Application (Standard Form 424), which is available, along with guidance for completing this form, at: www.grants.gov or

http://fa.statebuy.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=20&menu_id=68

____ (c) Proposal Narrative – Applicants are recommended to complete and submit the suggested Local Grants Application format attached to this announcement.

____ (d) Budget and Budget Justification (Narrative) – Applicants should complete and submit a detailed budget.

Application Deadline: All applications must be submitted on or before July 28, 2010, 11:59 p.m. eastern standard time. Applications submitted after 11:59 p.m. will be ineligible for consideration. **Begin the application process early**, as this will allow time to address any technical difficulties that may arise in advance of the deadline. There will be no exceptions to this application deadline.

Those applicants who wish to submit an application through Grants.gov need to register prior to submitting. **Registering with Grants.gov is a one-time process; however, it could take as long as two weeks to have the registration validated and confirmed. Please begin the registration process immediately to ensure that the process is completed well in advance of the deadline for applications.** Until that process is complete, you will not be issued a user password for Grants.gov, which is required for application submission. There are four steps that you must complete before you are able to register: (1) Obtain a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet (if your organization does not have one already) by calling 1-866-705-5711; (2) Register with Central Contractor Registry (CCR); (3) Register yourself as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR); and (4) Be authorized as an AOR by your organization. For more information, go to www.grants.gov. Please note that your CCR registration must be annually renewed. Failure to renew your CCR registration may prohibit submission of a grant application through Grants.gov.

Application Content: Applicants must follow the RFP instructions and conditions contained herein and supply all information required. **Failure to furnish all information or comply with stated requirements will result in disqualification from the competition.** Applicants must set forth full, accurate, and complete information as required by this RFP. The penalty for making false statements in proposals to the USG is prescribed on 18 U.S.C.1001.

TECHNICAL APPLICATION FORMAT

Introduction

The content of the technical application will be the most important element for evaluating the applications. The technical application will become the basis for the program description of the award. Accordingly, the technical portion should provide a clear statement of what is to be accomplished, how and on what schedule. It must be specific, complete, and concise and shall not exceed the specified number of pages.

The applicant should designate key personnel. In addition, applicants should present a staffing plan and management structure that stipulates the personnel that implement the proposed work plan. Resumes or curriculum vitae in English for each key personnel shall be included as attachments. Specific details for the content of the technical portion of the application are described below.

Applicants should submit technical applications according to the RFA instructions. The structure and maximum page limits (per proposal) of the application format are presented below.

Technical Application Format

- A. Standard Grants application forms
- B. Cover sheet (1 page);

- C. Executive Summary (2 pages);
- D. Organizational Capacity (3 pages);
- E. Program Description (17 pages);
- F. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (5 pages);
- G. Program Management and Key Personnel (2 pages);
- H. Attachments:
 - 1 Detailed Budget
 - 2 Resumes or CVs;
 - 3 Letter of Intent;
 - 4 Other attachments.

A. - Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424):

These forms can be found on-line at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/forms.html>.

Form SF-424C (*Budget Information—Construction Programs*)

Form SF-424D (*Assurances—Construction Programs*)

B. Cover Letter (1 page)

Provide the name and contact information for the Applicant, its Project Manager (the contact person who will receive routine correspondence regarding the contents and status of the proposed activities during the application and implementation processes), and the Authorized Representative (the person who is legally responsible for receiving grant funds should a grant be made).

C. Executive Summary (2 pages)

The executive summary should be a maximum two-page overview of what the applicant believes best represents the key features of its proposed program. This should include a brief description of the overall program strategic approach, expected results as linked to the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, and the level of funding requested and the proposed cost-share to be provided.

D. Organizational Capacity (3 pages)

The purpose of this section is to provide U.S. Embassy Kabul with an understanding of the Applicant's capacity to implement the program.

E. Program Description (17 pages)

Program Description (Maximum 17 pages excluding annexes): Applicants should focus on describing how they propose to achieve the activity objective(s). The application should describe the Applicant's innovative ideas, approaches and capacity to achieve the results of the program. Applicants are requested not to merely repeat what is already described in this RFA. The applications should take into account the technical evaluation

criteria found in Section B. and must comprise a narrative that contains the following information:

1. Discussion of the problem being addressed by the activity.
2. Detailed description of the activities to be undertaken including information on how the activity will be implemented and by whom, sustainability, and any other pertinent information.
3. A description of the management structure that includes: 1) an organizational chart with the proposed key staff; 2) roles, responsibilities, and authorities of key personnel; and 3) a discussion on the relationship of the country office to any HQ staff that may provide technical assistance

F. Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (5 pages)

In this section, the Applicant should identify specific program outcomes and propose a monitoring and evaluation plan as well as quarterly and annual incremental benchmarks for phase of implementation.

G. Program Management and Key Personnel (2 pages)

In this section, the Applicant should briefly provide an overview of how the proposed program will be managed. Applicants should identify the key personnel positions for this program. Include position descriptions (including roles and responsibilities), relevant experience and academic and professional qualifications for all key personnel. Applicants should also include a two to three page curriculum vita as an appendix for each candidate.

H. - Appendices:

The proposal submission must include two appendices, with a third, optional appendix to be submitted at the discretion of the applicant. Only the appendices listed below may be included as part of the application:

1. **Budget (Required)** – the budget must identify the total amount of funding requested, with a breakdown of amounts to be spent in the following budget categories: personnel; fringe benefits; travel; equipment; supplies; consultants/contracts; other direct costs; and indirect costs. The budget may not exceed 1 page in length, and may include an estimated cost for continuation activities, which will be considered for successful applicants to this RFP in future fiscal years based on performance and the availability of funds.
2. **Resume (Required)** – a resume, not to exceed 1 page in length, must be included for the proposed key staff person, such as the Project Director. If an individual for this type of position has not been identified, the applicant may submit a 1-page position description, identifying the qualifications and skills required for that position, in lieu of a resume.
3. **Letters of Intent (Optional)** – if local partners have been identified, which is strongly recommended by U.S. Embassy Kabul Public Affairs

Section, letters of intent should be included with the proposal. The letters must identify the type of relationship to be entered into (formal or informal), the roles and responsibilities of each partner in relation to the proposed project activities, and the expected result of the partnership. Please note that these are not letters of support, and should only be included for those organizations that will play an active role in the project, including those that receive financial support through the project budget. The individual letters cannot exceed 1 page in length, and applicants are limited to submitting up to 5 letters per proposal.

V. AWARD SELECTION CRITERIA

Evaluation Criteria: Applicants should note that the following criteria (1) serve as a standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters that should be addressed in all proposals. The USG will award grants to the applicant whose offer represents the best value to the USG on the basis of technical merit and cost.

Each application will be evaluated by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as deemed appropriate. The evaluation criteria have been tailored to the requirements of this RFP.

- A. ***Technical approach and methodology.*** This criterion is intended to measure both technical approach and methodology needed to execute the following components/sub-criterion: 1) Design and Construction of a 3 story building (both engineering and environmental) – up to max 6 points; 2) Procurement and installation of a basic radio FM Transmission Package– up to max 6 points ; 3) Procurement and installation of basic VHF/UHF 500 Watt Television Package – up to max 6 points; 4) Procurement and installation of a Basic Printing Equipment Package– up to max 6 points; 5) Radio, TV and Print Media Equipment Operations training – up to max 6 points.

Up to max. 30 pts

- B. ***Organizational approach and methodology.*** This criterion is intended to measure the organizational approach and methodology of the applicant, as well accounting for any sub-partners that the applicant may propose to enlist.

Up to max. 15 pts

- C. ***Qualifications of key personnel:*** This criterion is intended to evaluate four (4) key personnel as referenced in *key personnel* section of this solicitation.

Up to max. 30 pts

4. ***Demonstrated experience and accomplishments programming applicable activities in Afghanistan:*** This criterion is intended to assess the demonstrated experience, understanding, and accomplishment of the applicant in Afghanistan, including applicant's capacity to mobilize quickly and effectively.
- **Letters of Intent:** While submission of Letters of Intent is optional, and applications without will not be penalized, the review panel will favorably view their inclusion. The review panel will consider the types and depth of relationships that the applicant has with local organizations. The panel will also review the letters to determine the willingness of local organizations to participate in the effort, and that all parties have an understanding of their unique roles and responsibilities in terms of the proposed project.

Up to max. 25 pts

VI. AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

Award Notices: The grant award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient through either mail or facsimile transmission. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Anticipated Time to Award: Applicants should expect to be notified no later than August 19, 2010, with an anticipated award prior to September 30, 2010.

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

- **Reporting Requirements:** Grantees are required to submit quarterly program progress and financial reports throughout the project period. Progress and financial reports are due 30 days after the reporting period. Final programmatic and financial reports are due 90 days after the close of the project period. Progress reports at a minimum should be submitted via electronic mail to an address to be provided in the award.

VII. DISCLAIMER

If a proposal is selected for funding, the Department of State has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with the award. Renewal of an award to

increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of the Department of State.